

**REMARKS**

Claims 2-12, 14-21, and 23-30 are pending in the present application. Claims 2-8, 10-12, and 14-21 are amended. Claims 23-30 are new. Claims 23, 27 and 30 are independent.

**Drawings**

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's indication that the informal drawings filed in the present application are acceptable for examination purposes, and formal drawings will be required when the application is allowed. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that upon receipt of a Notice of Allowance, formal drawings will be filed.

**Specification Objections**

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the attempt to incorporate subject matter by reference to the co-pending U.S. patent application entitled "A SWITCH MATRIX ARCHITECTURE AND TECHNIQUES FOR IMPLEMENTING RAPID HITLESS SWITCHOVER" because the application number and filing date are missing. In the above amendments to the specification, Applicants have supplied the application number and filing date for the corresponding application. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the subject matter of this co-

pending application has now been properly incorporated by reference into the present application.

The Examiner also objected to various minor informalities on page 2 of the specification. Applicants have amended the specification as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this objection.

**35 U.S.C. 112 Rejection**

Claims 4 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, for containing various features that lack sufficient antecedent basis. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 4 and 7 have been amended such that each recited feature now contains sufficient antecedent basis. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

**Prior Art Rejection**

Claims 1-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,416,772 to Helton et al. (hereinafter Helton) in view of U.S. Patent 6,118,795 to Fukunaga et al. (hereinafter Fukunaga). This rejection,

insofar as it pertains to the presently pending claims, is respectfully traversed.

In the above amendments, independent claims 1, 13, and 22 have been canceled in favor of new independent claims 23, 27, and 30, respectively. Furthermore, according to the above claim amendments, dependent claims 2-12 and 14-21 are now each dependent, directly or indirectly, on claim 23 or 27.

Independent claims 23, 27, and 30 each recites either receiving or outputting concatenated optical signal frames conforming to a synchronous optical network standard, which occupy time slots whose sequential placement does not conform to the synchronous optical network standard. Applicants respectfully submit that this feature is not taught or suggested by the combination of Helton and Fukunaga.

Applicants respectfully submit that Helton discloses a switching circuit used for translating optical signal frames from one standard (SONET) to another standard (SDH). The translation performed by Helton's system includes switching time slots associated with the input SONET frames to new time slots associated with SDH frames. Applicants respectfully submit that, as acknowledged by the Examiner in page 4 of the Office Action, Helton fails to teach concatenated frames

whose time slots do not conform with the optical network standard associated with the frames.

Fukunaga discloses a system for processing a received optical signal, which includes concatenated frames associated with the SDH standard. In particular, Fukunaga's device examines the pointer information contained in the received frames to automatically determine the frame composition of the signal (e.g., whether the received signal includes STS - 1, STS-3, or STS-12 frames). Fukunaga relies on the fact that the sequence of concatenated frames conforms with the SDH standard in order to make this frame composition judgment.

Thus, there is no teaching or suggestion in either Helton or Fukunaga of concatenated optical signal frames occupying time slots whose sequential placement does not conform to the optical network standard associated with the frames, as required by independent claims 23, 27, and 30.

For the reasons stated above, Applicants submit that claims 23 and 27 are allowable. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-12 and 14-21 are allowable, at least by virtue of their dependency on claims 23 and 27. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

It is further respectfully submitted that new dependent claims 24-26, 28, and 29 are allowable by virtue of their dependency on allowable claims 23 and 27.

CONCLUSION

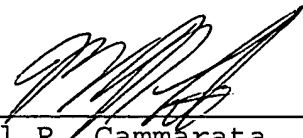
In the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the various outstanding objections and claim rejections. Applicants earnestly seek a Notice of Allowance in connection with the pending claims.


Should the Examiner believe that any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, the Examiner is requested to contact Jason Rhodes (Registration No. 47,305) at the telephone number of the undersigned in order to discuss this application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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